

REMARKS

Claims 1-4 and 21 are pending. The Examiner's reconsideration of the rejections is respectfully requested in view of the amendments and remarks.

Applicants appreciate the Examiner's indication that claims 22 and 27 are objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

Claims 1, 2, 13, and 15 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 5,606,343 to Tsuboyama et al. in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,380,942 to Hussain et al. The Examiner stated essentially that the combined teachings of Tsuboyama and Hussain teach or suggest all of the limitations of claims 1, 2, 13, and 15.

Claim 1 has been amended to include the allowable subject matter of claim 27. Accordingly, claim 1 is believed to be allowable over the combined teachings of Tsuboyama and Hussain.

Claim 2 depends from claim 1. Claim 2 is believed to be allowable for at least the reasons given for claim 1. Claims 13 and 15 have been cancelled. The Examiner's reconsideration of the rejection is respectfully requested.

Claims 3 and 16 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Tsuboyama in view of Hussain, and further in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,611,260 to Greenberg et al. The Examiner stated essentially that the combined teachings of Tsuboyama, Hussain and Greenberg teach or suggest all the limitations of claims 3 and 16.

Claim 3 depends from claim 1. Claim 3 is believed to be allowable for at least the reasons given from claim 1. Claim 16 has been cancelled. The Examiner's reconsideration of the rejection is respectfully requested.

Claims 4, 14, and 21 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Tsuboyama in view of Hussain, and further in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,097,364 to Miyamoto et al. The Examiner stated essentially that the combined teachings of Tsuboyama, Hussain, and Miyamoto teach or suggest all the limitations of claims 4, 14, and 21.

Claim 4 depends from claim 1. Claim 4 is believed to be allowable for at least the reasons given from claim 1. Claim 14 has been cancelled. Claim 21 has been amended to include the allowable limitations of claim 22. Accordingly, claim 21 is believed to be in condition for allowance.

Claims 20 and 28 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Tsuboyama in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,008,794 to Ishii. The Examiner stated essentially that the combined teachings of Tsuboyama and Ishii teach or suggest all the limitations of claims 20 and 28.

Claims 20 and 28 have been cancelled.

For the forgoing reasons, the application, including claims 1-4 and 21, is believed to be in condition for allowance. Early and favorable reconsideration of the case is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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